

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8343

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5597

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: STATUS OF INDO-US JOINT ACTIVITIES

REF: STATE 085363

SUMMARY. WE HAVE TAKEN A LOOK AT THE PRESENT STATUS OF INDO-US JOINT ACTIVITIES, JOINT COMMISSION AND OTHER, AND CONCLUDED THAT IT IS LARGELY "BUSINESS AS USUAL". BY THIS WE MEAN ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE ABSENCE OF THE JOINT COMMISSION CONTINUE TO TAKE PLACE AND ONLY A FEW SPECIAL PROJECTS ARE UNDER WAY. THE PACE REMAINS SLOW AND WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, NO INITIATIVES WHICH AROSE FROM THE THREE SUBCOMMISSIONS HAVE PROGRESSED VERY FAR. THE GOI HAS ISSUED NO ORDERS TO CEASE COOPERATING WITH AMERICANS BUT NOTHING WHICH REQUIRES HIGH-LEVEL APPROVAL IS BEING PUSHED UP FOR DECISION. SIMILARLY, NOTHING IS BEING DONE WHICH WOULD ATTRACT PUBLICITY TO US-INDIAN
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COOPERATION. JOINT ACTIVITIES, HOWEVER, QUIETLY CON-

TINUE, ALTHOUGH THE ABSENCE OF THE DEADLINE PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSION MEETING HAS SLOWED SOME ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE ECONOMIC SUBCOMMISSION. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN POSTPONED HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON, THE EMBASSY HAS AVOIDED ANY NEW INITIATIVES WITH THE GOI. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO PURSUE ONGOING ACTIVITIES AND SOUGHT TO RESPOND IN HELPFUL WAYS TO INDIAN INITIATIVES. WE HAVE RECEIVED NO INDICATION ABOUT WHEN CHAVAN MIGHT RESCHEDULE HIS VISIT. TREASURY SECRETARY SIMON REMINDED HIM OF THE OUTSTANDING INVITATION BUT CHAVAN GAVE NO HINT OF HIS PLANS. IN THE MEANTIME, OUR JOINT ACTIVITIES CONTINUE AS THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTIONS WILL INDICATE.

2. SCIENCE: THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAS CONTINUED APPROVING NEW RUPEE-SUPPORTED JOINT RESEARCH PROJECTS. THE SATELLITE INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION EXPERIMENT CONTINUES ON SCHEDULE. OUR ASSOCIATIONS WITH INDIAN NUCLEAR OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO BE GOOD AND THE EXCHANGE OF SCIENTISTS PROGRAM CONTINUES UNAFFECTED. THE INDIAN DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAS MET THE REQUIREMENT LEVIED ON THE GOI BY THE S&T SUBCOMMISSION FOR PROJECTS IN THREE AREAS FOR COOPERATION, ALTHOUGH THESE APPARENTLY WILL STILL REQUIRE APPROVAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. OUR RELATIONS WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE INDIAN SCIENCE MINISTRIES REMAIN EXCELLENT.

3. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES: NORMAL COMMERCIAL CONTACTS CONTINUE TO FLOURISH AND THE US REMAINS INDIA'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNER. COMPANIES ENGAGED IN TRADE OR INVESTMENT RELATIONS WITH THE US HAVE SO FAR NOT BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE CHILL IN RELATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS ON THE SPECIFIC LIST OF PROJECTS APPROVED AT THE JANUARY MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL SUBCOMMISSION. THE REASONS FOR THIS LACK OF ACTION ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE THE ELIMINATION OF THE DEADLINE FOR THE COMMISSION MEETING AND THE ABSENCE OF OFFICIAL DIRECTION

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AS TO THE FUTURE OF INDO-US RELATIONS RATHER THAN ANY ANTI-US TILT IMPOSED FROM THE TOP. THE JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL OBTAINED GOI APPROVAL ONLY WHEN A STAFF MEMBER FROM THE US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ARRIVED IN DELHI AND FORCED THE GOI TO FOCUS ON THE ISSUE. THE DECISION WAS POSITIVE, HOWEVER, AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR CREATION OF THE COUNCIL ARE MOVING SATISFACTORILY. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE NO ONE IN DELHI IS WORKING IN REGARD TO THE SPECIAL INDO-US WORKING GROUP

ON AGRICULTURE. THE PROPOSAL TO SEND AN INDIAN DELEGATION TO THE US TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT ON DOUBLE TAXATION SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN PUT ON ICE FOR THE TIME BEING BUT THIS IS PROBABLY DUE MORE TO THE PRESSURE OF OTHER WORK AND INDIAN INDECISIVENESS WHETHER IT WANTS AN AGREEMENT THAN BECAUSE OF ANY PROBLEM IN INDO-US RELATIONS. SIMILARLY, THE INDIAN TRADE MISSION HAS BEEN DEFERRED BUT PROBABLY MORE BECAUSE OF BUSINESS FACTORS IN THE US THAN UNCERTAINTY ABOUT INDO-US RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER IS PROBABLY ALSO A FACTOR. WE HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN LISTS OF AREAS FOR US INVESTMENT OR OF AREAS IN WHICH THE GOI WISHES TO PURCHASE TECHNOLOGY AS AGREED IN THE SUBCOMMISSION. EMBASSY ATTEMPTS TO CONDUCT A GENERAL REVIEW OF ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SUBCOMMISSION WORK WITH THE GOI HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DIVERTED BUT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH SENIOR ECONOMIC OFFICIALS HAVE REMAINED EXCELLENT.

4. EDUCATION AND CULTURE: THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN MAKING SLOW PROGRESS PURSUING PLANS AGREED UPON DURING THE SUBCOMMISSION MEETING. SO FAR THIS HAS BEEN LARGELY A MATTER OF OUR INITIATIVE AND INDIAN RESPONSE BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO RELUCTANCE TO RESPOND FROM THE INDIAN SIDE. THE INDIAS SEEMED TO HAVE ABANDONED THE EARLIER VIEW THAT THERE COULD BE NO OFFICIAL ACTION UNTIL THE JOINT COMMISSION MET AND APPROVED THE SUBCOMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS. THE UNITED STATES EDUCATIONS FOUNDATION IS FUNCTIONING WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. WE ARE HAVING NO DIFFICULTIES GETTING APPROVAL FOR AMERICAN GRANTEES OR OFFICE OF EDUCATION SUMMER GROUP PROJECTS. OUR INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM NOMINEES CONTINUE VERY SLOWLY TO WEND THEIR WAY THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BUT WITH AN EXCEPTION HERE OR THERE THEY DO GET APPROVED. OTHER USIS CULTURAL PROGRAMS --SEMINARS AND THE LIKE--
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PROCEED WITHOUT INTERFERENCE BY THE GOI. USIS INFORMATION ACTIVITIES--RADIO AND TELEVISION PLACEMENT FOR EXAMPLE--CONTINUE TO FIND SOME INDIAN RECEPTIVITY.

5. WE CONCLUDE FROM ALL OF THE ABOVE THAT THERE ARE NO INDIAN ORDERS TO SUSPEND ACTIVITIES WITH THE US; TO THE CONTRARY, SOME MIDDLE-LEVEL INDIAN OFFICIALS ARE STICKING THEIR NECKS OUT AND MAKING DECISIONS TO PROCEED. MATTERS WHICH REQUIRE HIGH-LEVEL DECISION (E. G., USE OF AID FUNDS TO SUPPORT SCIENTISTS IN THE US AND FOR SCHOLARSHIPS) ARE NOT RECEIVING ATTENTION, HOWEVER, WE ESTIMATE THAT IF A JOINT COMMISSION MEETING IS SCHEDULED, ACTIVITY WITHIN THE GOI COULD PICK UP RAPIDLY AND THE COMMISSION COULD BE IN A POSITION TO MAKE A SHOWING OF PROGRESS AS A RESULT. ALL OF THE ACTIVITY

WHICH IS TAKING PLACE IS DOING SO QUIETLY IN THE ABSENCE
OF ANY PUBLICITY, WHICH THE GOI WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY FIND
UNDESIRABLE IN VIEW OF ITS PUBLIC POLICY DIFFERENCES
WITH THE US.

6. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER THE SHARP UP-
UPSURGE IN ANTI-US STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES BY CONGRESS
PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS
WILL BRING ABOUT A FURTHER SLOWDOWN IN THE ACTIVITIES
DESCRIBED ABOVE.
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